



Dress for Success

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DRESS FOR SUCCESS: TOP TIPS FOR SLAYING EIW (AND OTHER INTERVIEWS)

GENERAL CONCEPT: you want to present yourself as a capable individual who has all their ducks in a row. This means your outsides need to project that image, as much as the way you behave in the interview. **You are bringing your best, most confident, personable, professional self to these meetings.** As superficial as it can seem, when people are comparing among dozens of bright, impressive students here and elsewhere, these small details can make a difference in who gets one of the limited spots at a firm.



SUITS:



- Everyone will be wearing some version of a suit at each day of EIW—you will need at least two suit options for the four days of EIW (This can be a single suit you keep meticulously clean, or two/ three suits).
 - For most people, off-the-rack suits will need to be altered in order to look their best, and tailoring can take a week or more--**DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE WEEK BEFORE EIW TO GET YOUR SUIT(S) TAILORED.**
 - Suits should generally be in the dark color range—medium or charcoal gray is the classic choice, black and navy are also acceptable. It is important to buy these pieces together so the fabrics and colors match exactly. With a few limited exceptions, patterned suits are not formal enough for interviewing with law firms.
- How do I know if my clothes fit properly?
- Button-down shirts should button smoothly and not have any gaping between buttons.
 - Hemlines for pants should generally just break at the shoe—they should not be touching the floor as you walk, nor showing more than your ankle when you sit down.
 - Your jacket should fit comfortably across your shoulders and be able to button without stretch lines at the back seam.
 - Jacket sleeves should come to the base of your hand and no longer. Your shirtsleeve should just barely peek out.
 - Online resources for suiting up:
 - <https://www.wikihow.com/Wear-a-Suit>
 - <https://corporette.com/shop-page/shopping-guides/guide-to-basic-womens-suiting/>
 - https://www.buzzfeed.com/peggy/unspoken-suit-rules-every-man-should-know?utm_term=.lsxOPDB9A#.up4y7a5QZ
 - <https://blog.stitchfix.com/ask-a-stylist/how-do-i-prevent-a-button-up-shirt-from-gaping/>
- A blouse or top with a modest neckline is an acceptable alternative to a button-down for those choosing womenswear suiting.
- All of your clothes should be wrinkle-free and crisp (i.e. fresh from the dry cleaners unless they are new).
 - New suits will need to have the securing threads removed from the pockets and skirt seams.
 - If you are able, consider bringing a backup shirt with you each day in case you spill, sweat through it, etc.

Suits don't have to be expensive. Even relatively inexpensive suits can look fantastic if they are tailored to fit properly.

ACCESSORIES:



- In the sea of dark suits, you want to make sure you're memorable. Feel free to add a piece of personal flair to your attire with a more colorful shirt or an interesting pin, scarf, jewelry, tie, cufflinks, or funky socks. If the item came from your travels abroad or has some other interesting story attached to it that you can tell when someone comments on it, so much the better. It's a great way to inject a bit of personality within the bounds of professional attire.
- Professional bag/folio: you'll need to carry around extra copies of your resume and transcript to interviews; a beat up backpack or messenger bag will detract from the message you want to send. Consider getting a leather (or leather-look) folio, a modern briefcase or attaché, or something else that you can use for EIW and at your summer job for carrying around the daily necessities. (Again, this should likely be in a classic color and style.)
- Those wearing skirts have an additional consideration around hosiery. While flesh-toned pantyhose are the safest, most conservative choice, bare legs are also an option. In fall and winter, opaque or semi-opaque tights in dark colors are also an option.)

SHOES:

- Not only your suits but your shoes need to be checked for comfort and proper fit. You'll be on your feet a lot and frequently hustling between rooms.
- Shoes should be a dark color. If wearing a belt, it should match your shoes.
- Shoes should be free of scuffs, stains, or obvious wear.
- All shoes should be closed-toe (no peep toes or sandals).
- For those wearing heels, anything up to 3" should work fine. Heels higher than that can be both impractical for the reasons noted above, and can detract from your professional image.
- For those in womenswear, most flat shoes are not formal enough for an interview. Check with OCP for options that work if flats are your thing.
- If you buy new shoes, wear them around your house and even for a several days prior to EIW if possible. If the soles are smooth, consider roughing them up with sandpaper so that you don't slip on hardwood floors or smooth carpeting.



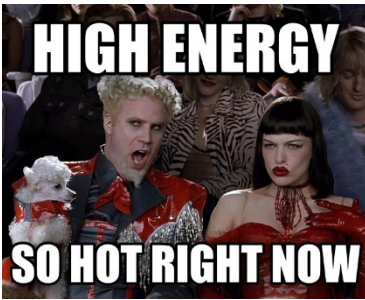
PERSONAL GROOMING:



- Hair: Wavy, curly, straight, natural, braided, twisted—all styles can look professional as long as they are neat. For most folks, planning to visit the barber or salon within the week prior to EIW is a good idea so your hair looks its best.
 - Around EIW and callback time is not the time to try any major new hairstyle or color changes—you want a style you know how to handle and you are comfortable in.
- Makeup: If makeup is part of your regular routine, then plan to wear it. If it's not, then don't. The point is to do what makes you feel comfortable and confident.
 - If you do wear makeup, choose the most understated, clean and classic look that's still "you".

- **Fingernails:** should be trimmed and impeccably clean. Clear or pale pink polish are the standbys for those who wear nail polish. (Essie Mademoiselle is a good choice for all skin tones.) Bright colors and/or nail décor is not generally advisable for EIW.
- **Deodorant:** Make sure you have a strong antiperspirant/deodorant and consider bringing a travel size with you in case you need it mid-day.
 - If you normally use deodorant only, pick up a travel size stick/spray with antiperspirant for use on interview days. Between the stress and the August heat, you won't regret it.
- **Facial hair:** needs to look neat, trimmed and brushed/conditioned. Otherwise, clean shaven daily is the way to go.
- It is not advisable to try new skin care or makeup products in the days before interviews. You will be under extra stress and more likely to have a reaction, which will only make your stress worse. If you have a condition which flares up under stress (such as psoriasis), it is a good idea to have your prescribed/standard treatment in-hand prior to EIW week so you are prepared.

ENERGY



- Bring headphones/earbuds to listen to some upbeat music or some calming meditations in between interviews. It can help calm your nerves and send you into your interviews with a positive attitude.
- Tuck some small, unlikely-to-make-a-mess snacks into your bag for the day to avoid a blood sugar crash: dried fruit, nuts, fruit leather, and energy/protein bars are good choices. Not a good choice: anything with chocolate (can melt), granola (too crumbly) or lots of liquid (can spill).

- Throw some breath mints (not gum) in your bag if you like them. Just be sure your mouth is empty before you walk into the interview.
- Despite the stress and the opportunities for excess, limit your caffeine and alcohol consumption during EIW and during interview/quasi-interview events. You need a good night's sleep to bring your best self each day, and being hungover, tired, or over-wired is not anyone's best self.



We know that this is general advice and you are an individual. What's right for you may differ from the general advice offered here. If you have any question about your outfit or anything else here before or during EIW, we're here to help! Feel free to email your counselor or Anne Linder (who really geeks out on this stuff, alinder@umich.edu). OCP counselors will be on hand at EIW with help and supplies for small emergencies, so stop by—we are here to help you succeed!

FINALLY:



While these tips are all aimed at making you feel and look your best, remember that you are a human, interviewing with other humans. None of us are perfect. Sometimes acne flares up, palms are sweaty, coffee gets spilled, etc. When that happens, you've got to just own it with grace and humor. The other humans will understand—they've been in your shoes! If you can accept that life can go wrong and still roll forward confidently, you may just impress your interviewer more than if things were perfect.

Dress for Success Interview Checklist

- Suit(s), shirts, shoes, accessories selected
- Suit(s) tailored
- Folio or bag for your extra copies of resume and transcript
- Barber/salon appointment scheduled
- _____
- _____
- _____